

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9628

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 5790

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET JOURNALIST ON DEMICHEV, SHELEPIN AND  
PARTY PLENUM

1. GERMAN AMBASSADOR TOLD AMBASSADOR STOESSEL  
APRIL 24 OF RECENT CONVERSATION WITH "TOP SOVIET  
JOURNALIST," IN WHICH LATTER STATED THAT DEMICHEV  
SLOT IN PARTY SECRETARIAT AND SHELEPIN POSITION ON  
POLITBURO WOULD NOT BE FILLED UNTIL NEXT YEAR'S  
PARTY CONGRESS. JOURNALIST COMMENTED THAT THIS  
WAS TOO BAD BECAUSE SUCCESSOR IS NEEDED IN DEMICHEV JOB.  
JOURNALIST SAID THAT SHELEPIN'S DISMISSAL WAS PURELY AN  
INTERNAL AFFAIR "INTENDED TO CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE PARTY  
CONGRESS," AND WAS NOT RELATED TO EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

2. SOVIET JOURNALIST WENT ON TO TELL GERMANS THAT  
THERE WAS NO ONE IN THE LEADERSHIP WHO OPPOSED  
DETENTE, BUT THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT SOME MAY BE  
"NOSTALGIC" ABOUT THE OLD DAYS WHEN THERE WAS  
CLEAR, FIRM LEADERSHIP AND A "FIRST ON THE TABLE."  
IMPLICATION WAS THAT "NOSTALGIA" RELATED TO INTERNAL  
AFFAIRS AND THAT SHELEPIN WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO  
WANTED FIRMER LEADERSHIP. JOURNALIST THOUGHT SHELEPIN'S  
KGB PAST MAY HAVE BEEN AN ELEMENT IN HIS DISMISSAL AND  
FELT THAT SHELEPIN WOULD NOT KEEP HIS TRADE UNION POST.

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3. JOURNALIST SAID HE WAS SURPRISED THAT GROMYKO,

RATHER THAN BREZHNEV, GAVE MAIN SPEECH AT PARTY  
PLENUM. HE SURMISED THIS MEANT PLENUM DEBATE ON  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS WAS RATHER ROUTINE AND THAT THERE  
WERE NO CHANGES OR PROBLEMS WHICH MADE IT NECESSARY  
FOR BREZHNEV TO GIVE MAJOR SPEECH. JOURNALIST  
ADDED THAT BREZHNEV ALSO HAS TO WATCH HIS HEALTH. ANOTHER  
REASON FOR GROMYKO TO GIVE THE SPEECH.  
STOESSEL

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## Message Attributes

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